

ADDRESS TO AN EMIGRANT.

PERMIT a stranger to address you, on the eve of your departure from the land which gave you birth to the shores of a far distant clime, where you probably intend to end your days. After frequently revolving the subject in your mind, weighing the advantages and disadvantages of a removal from the country of your fathers, you have, at length, determined to go forth, to aid in colonizing a remote part of the world. This is, then, a most interesting and solemn period in your history, and the step you are now taking will exert a powerful influence on your future destiny, and probably on that of unborn generations. The circumstances in which you are found can scarcely fail to awaken serious reflections, or to compel you to think of the past with deep emotion. The home in which you were born, the scenes familiar to your childhood, and the friends of your early life all rise to view; and while you remember that, in all probability, you will see them no more for ever, sorrow fills your heart, and you feel the bitterness of separation. But the events of your future life are presented in the distance, surrounded with all that is bright and cheering; or they rise in imperfect and shadowy outline to your view, invested with uncertainty and gloom; and while conflicting emotions of hope and fear fill your bosom, as you remain ignorant of what shall happen to you, you are prompted to say with the patriarch, "If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to

put on, then shall the Lord be my God," Gen. xxviii. 20, 21.

The present moment, then, is highly important to you, and if you feel aright, corresponding emotions will take possession of your heart. There is much of mercy in the position you now occupy, and this should be thankfully acknowledged to God, the Giver of every good and perfect gift. It is not the least of your mercies that, after much deliberation, and, I would hope, prayer for direction, you have obtained a conviction that Divine Providence is, by your removal from home, opening a way for your future support and usefulness, and that the cloud of God's gracious presence will go before you. It is He who fixes the bounds of our habitation, and setteth the solitary in families, who not unfrequently says, by the arrangements of his providential government, as he did in vision to Abraham, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee," Gen. xii. 1. There is therefore nothing unlawful in emigration; it is one great means of peopling the earth, and causing the ground to yield its fruits for the sustenance of man and beast. From the patriarchal times, down to the present day, as population has become dense, in particular localities, individuals and families have migrated to more extensive regions, and peopled other lands. The love of adventure, a thirst for the acquisition of territory, and a desire after wealth have acted as motives, and stimulated many persons to such undertakings; while others have left their homes from a love of freedom, an attachment to religious truth, or in obedience to the command of God. Thus some seeds are wafted by boisterous winds, and others are borne by the kindly hand of man to the uncultivated soil of an uninhabited island, but both alike have been deposited in the earth, and have

brought forth fruit abundantly. Thus in nature and providence Jehovah works “all things according to the counsel of his own will.”

Allow me, then, to congratulate you on your present position. You are not an exile for conscience’ sake, or for liberty; you are not compelled to leave your homes, as many good men have been compelled to do, in quest of a spot where you can worship the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to the dictates of your conscience. The lines, in this respect, have fallen to you in pleasant places, and you have had a goodly heritage. Your blessings have been greater than the blessings of your forefathers.

It is a matter of great thankfulness that you are not urged to flee from your country, as many have fled, to elude the vigilance of justice; and that you are not in the position of many unhappy persons, who, having violated the laws under which we live, have forfeited their personal liberty, and are reluctantly conveyed to a penal colony, there to reap the wretched reward of their deeds. Humiliating as the fact is, our exemption from these and from similar degradations is to be traced to the restraining or renewing grace of God. “Who maketh thee to differ from another, and what hast thou that thou hast not received?” Review, then, all the way by which you have been led; think of the innumerable mercies with which your lives have been crowned, and pray fervently that the goodness of the Most High may lead you to repentance, and fill your heart with adoring gratitude to him.

The present moment is one that calls for impartial self-examination. You have long resided in a country distinguished by its abundant religious privileges, and as you are about to leave it for ever, it becomes you to inquire, what

benefit you have derived from the means of grace, with which you have been so long favoured. How many sabbaths have rolled over you, how many sermons you have heard, how many opportunities you have had of knowing God, and of enjoying his salvation! And yet perhaps you are going forth to a distant land, with the guilt of all the sins you have committed in Britain on your conscience; and should you die in that state, either before or after you finish your voyage, your immortal spirit would be landed on the shores of perdition, and be for ever undone. Surely it is time for you to seek the Lord; arise and call upon his name, that you perish not. Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved, and go forth a new creature in him.

The voyage on which you are entering is a long one, and many of its hours may become tedious to you on the great waters. Let me urge you by all means to secure a Bible, if you have not one, and to make that the companion of your days and nights. Search the Scriptures, for they testify of Christ, and are able to make you wise unto salvation. Do not be ashamed to acknowledge God, or to commend your spirit to him in morning and evening prayer, though you may be surrounded by persons prepared to treat devotional exercises with indifference or contempt. During your detention in the vessel, you may have much to try your temper, and to call for mutual forbearance on the part of the passengers; under these circumstances, endeavour to exemplify that meekness of wisdom, that courtesy and readiness to do good to others, which the Scriptures command, and which is so strikingly and beautifully enforced upon us, by the example of our Divine Lord and Saviour, who pleased not himself, but who lived and died for the good of others. As

you gaze upon the mighty world of waters over which you are about to sail, think of the great power of God who created the sea, and fixed its bounds ; remember that you are sailing across the ocean of life, and that you will soon land on the shores of eternity ; think of that heavenly world in which “there shall be no more sea,” and seek a meetness “for the inheritance of the saints in light.” Meditation on these and on kindred subjects will serve to preserve your mind from fainting, will occupy your thoughts to advantage, and enable you to speak a word in season to those who surround you.

I cordially wish you a prosperous voyage, by the will of God. He will, I hope, give the winds and the waves charge concerning you, and guide you in safety to the haven where you would be. I imagine you at length arrived at the point of your destination, and planting your feet on that country, which is henceforth to be regarded as your home. Let not the excitement of such new scenes, as will then present themselves to view, banish the thought of God from your mind. Forget not to acknowledge his hand, but praise him for the mercies showed you in preserving you from shipwreck, and from the numerous perils of the great deep. Your heart may sink within you, as you come in contact with the difficulties of a colony, where you will miss, at least for a time, many of the comforts of an English home ; then endeavour to put your trust in God. Then remember that many of the patriarchs wandered about as strangers and pilgrims in the earth ; that Jacob lay down at Bethel, under the canopy of heaven, with a stone for his pillow, and that even there he had communion with God, and was assured of his providential goodness ; and above all, remember that the Lord of angels and of men, when he tabernacled in human flesh “had not where to lay his head.” But perhaps when

you reach the colony, you will be full of hope. Visions of future greatness, of accumulating wealth, and of growing respectability may present themselves to your imagination. Endeavour, then, to recollect, that without the blessing of God your toil will be in vain; that if you realize in any degree your expectations, you cannot enjoy them long; and pray for grace to imitate the merchantman, who, seeking goodly pearls, found one of great price, and went and sold all that he had, and bought it, Matt. xiii. 45, 46.

In choosing for yourself a habitation, have, as much as possible, regard to its nearness to a place of worship, to which you may repair on the sabbath, and at other times, to hear the word of eternal life, and to worship God. Wherever you pitch your tent, there erect an altar to the honour and worship of the one living and true Jehovah. It is a mournful fact, that many persons who, in Great Britain, made a profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ have, after their emigration, gradually relapsed into a state of indifference and irreligion, and have sunk into a condition of guilt and immorality which it is fearful to consider. This has been in part attributable to the circumstance, that they have settled in a remote part of the colony, where Christian friends or Christian instruction could seldom be met with. In addition to the want of public worship, they have neglected to read the Scriptures at home, and omitted to pray with their families, and have thus rapidly cast off even the forms of godliness, while their children have grown up in a state little better than that of the heathen aborigines by whom they were surrounded. As you value the favour of God, as you love your own souls, and as you are anxious for the welfare of the rising generation, I beseech you to avoid that course of apostasy to which I have referred. Perhaps a limited income at home, and a desire to make a

suitable provision for your family, have prompted you to emigrate ; but what will it profit you, or your children, if you could gain all the wealth of a colony, or of the world, and lose your own souls ? Better live in poverty, and die, as did Lazarus, at the rich man's gate, with the comfort of gospel ordinances, than to live and die in their neglect, with all the advantages that earth and time could afford !

It is an important consideration, that your conduct will have an influence for good or for evil, not only on the persons who may surround you ; but on the people of the next succeeding generations. This is the case with every person in every land ; but it is pre-eminently the case with the early settlers of a colony. They labour, and others will enter into their labours ; they sow, and others will come and reap. The first settlers in any land lay the foundation of the social edifice, and the building of after ages much accords with the foundation. Your principles and conduct will produce a more powerful impression in a thinly peopled territory than in the dense population of home. Everything, then, in your personal and relative situation conspires to prove the great importance of your honouring God, of your going forth in his fear, and of aiming at the promotion of his glory.

And now, voyager, farewell ! Many tongues have lately faltered out this word of separation, and many an aching heart and weeping eye have attended the utterance. Its sound has been to you like the knell of departed joys, and the remembrancer of past endearments. You feel painfully at parting from friends, relatives, and home, and your heart is softened by a review of the past, and by an anticipation of the future. May the emotion you now feel lead you to the throne of grace, and cause you to cast your care on Jesus, who careth for you ! May the presence of God go with you,

and give you rest ! You part with many whom you will soon meet again. Where ? In heaven or in hell ? A little time will decide that question, and decide it for ever. Oh, then let the salvation of your immortal spirit be the chief subject of concern, “and with all your getting, get understanding,” the Spirit, the fear and the love of God. I commend you to him, and to the word of his grace which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them who are sanctified by faith. Amen. Once more, farewell !

How are thy servants bless'd, O Lord !

How sure is their defence !

Eternal Wisdom is their guide,

Their help, Omnipotence.

In foreign realms, and lands remote,

Supported by thy care,

Through burning climes they pass unhurt,

And breathe in tainted air.

In midst of dangers, fears, and deaths,

Thy goodness we'll adore ;

We'll praise thee for thy mercies past,

And humbly hope for more.

Our life, while thou preserv'st that life,

Thy sacrifice shall be ;

And death, when death shall be our lot,

Shall join our souls to thee.

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